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Our office believed that high quality Electronic Medical Records integrated with top performing Practice Management software was the future of Medicine. In an era of stagnant Medicare reimbursement rates, higher levels of accountability, and skyrocketing overhead costs for health & medical malpractice insurances, medical offices need to use technology to streamline work, increase efficiencies, improve documentation, decrease malpractice lawsuit risk, and improve profitability. I spent six months researching and comparing dozens of different EMR's. The lengthy search revealed that the Practice Management software, Electronic Medical Records, and Document Imaging & Storage capabilities of **eClinicalWorks** was cutting edge and full service. And, I found that my preferential, top-end EMR of choice –**eCW**-- was priced much more favorably than any EMR with similar abilities.

We converted to eClinicalWorks in late 2004. We switched from our old practice management software (that is well established nationally) to eCW, as well as from all paper charting to all electronic charting through eCW. The data migration of over 14,000 patient demographic files went very smoothly. The scanning of paper files, forms, insurance cards, and driver's licenses was quick and easy as patients came through the office. The staff and physicians quickly learned to use eClinicalWorks thanks to its "***intuitively designed***" layout and features; the manager states that she was a "computer dummy," but found the software very easy to use and navigate. And most importantly, the office has found the ***"eClinicalWorks support team has been excellent and timely"*** in responding to any needs.

Patient Satisfaction and Quality of Care have definitely improved since implementing eClinicalWorks. No longer are referrals "missed" because someone takes the chart away from the referral desk before the referral is completed for a patient. No more searching for the specific person who knows the "right information" when a patient calls back after the office initiates a call; any staff can pull up the telephone message that has been directed toward this patient's needs. A doctor, a nurse, a referral specialist, and a billing coordinator can all be working with the same patient's file at one time to address any needs in a timely manner. Additionally, prescriptions are faxed to pharmacies before patients leave the office. Ill patients can pick up their medications when they arrive at the pharmacy without delay; and, no more call backs to refill meds already addressed because of scripts not turned in or lost by patients. Thanks to the "Rx History" in eCW, all of a patient's prior medications can be viewed within seconds; no more searching through multiple encounter notes for the name of a past rash cream or allergy med that the patient wants refilled. All lab & diagnostic test reports for each doctor remain in his or her review list until the doctor addresses the test or signs off on it; no longer can someone take an abnormal test away from a doctor's desk and accidentally file it away! And best of all, No More Lost Charts; any patient file can be viewed from any computer in the office network – endless chart searches are a thing of the past; this is a major time saver for staff.

Some noteworthy features in eClinicalWorks make this software excel in comparison to all the other EMR's we considered. The "pic lists" and "templates" in eCW are "extremely fast and simple" to use, and the we commonly create or adjust these while we are actually talking to

patients; also, the template "merging" ability allows us to quickly mix and match multiple templates during a single visit --- I recently mixed a Well Physical with a Sinusitis with a Lateral Epicondylitis template all during one appt, and all in a matter of seconds. We are very happy with the "Auto-Update" feature which has provided us with frequent version enhancements and updates; the software just keeps getting better and better all the time. Thanks to the streamlined nature of the underlying software, we can use VPN software that allows all of us to connect at once from home to review labs through their interface, review written reports, address phone messages, finish any incomplete work, look up patients while on call, fax scripts to pharmacies, schedule appointments for patients that are in the ER and need follow-up, etc; we have found the home connectivity is very fast and invaluable. As an office of over 20 people, the members of our practice have found the internal email system in eCW to be a huge time-saver for communicating messages to one person or as many as desired through simple, rapid emails which create an immediate notification on the screen of the email recipients. The "Alert" system in eCW not only reminds us of preventive care needs for patients, but also helps us track patient specific needs, such as a repeat Chest CT every 4 months to follow a Pulmonary Nodule or a repeat Colonoscopy in 3 years to recheck on Colon Polyps; the alerts ensure that we do not to forget important tests which not only have important quality of care issues, but also significant medical-legal implications. Additionally, these alerts have helped boost office income by reminding us to do appropriate in house testing and vaccinations that are recommended for patients with diagnoses like Asthma, Emphysema, and Diabetes. We have a bidirectional lab interface with Labcorp, and we have an incoming interface from Quest (and are in the process of getting a bidirectional one). EClinicalWorks also has wonderful inking & faxing abilities that makes it easy to sign-off & fax back requests for signatures on forms through the EMR.

Furthermore, eClinicalWorks has made a tremendous positive financial impact for our practice. Payroll is the biggest overhead expense for any Primary Care medical practice. In the first 8 months of using eCW, we had a significant staff reduction thanks to increased efficiencies; our Family Medicine office went from 5 full-time Medical Assistants, 4 full-time Front Office staff, & 2 full-time Billing staff, down to 4 MA's, 3 F.O. staff, and 1.25 FTE Billing staff. **We (The doctors) are now saving over $5,500 per month in payroll & benefits. Additionally, the practice now saves all the money previously spent on paper charting supplies and paper faxing supplies; this has already saved us $7,000 in their 15 months on eClinicalWorks.** Utilizing the EMR has also resulted in us doctors charting and billing more comprehensively; in a comparison of a typical month in 2005 on eCW versus the same month in 2004 with paper charting, the doctors charged 13% more level four & level five office visits in proportion to the total visits by all doctors in the office. The reimbursement for one extra 99214 and one extra 99215 per day at the 2005 Medicare rate (versus one visit level lower), equals an extra $68/day; when multiplied out 5 days per week over 49 weeks per year, this totals an extra $16,660 per year of income per provider for seeing the same exact patient population. **In fact, in our first year on eCW, the 3 doctors who have been in the office for over 2 years averaged over $20,000/doctor more in income (prior to expenses**) despite having a reduced schedule the first 1 to 2 months on the EMR and despite having brought in a forth doctor who was seeing some of our prior patient overflow. Moreover, we are also getting paid by insurance companies much faster than ever before (as compared to our old nationally well known PM software). There is no delay waiting for staff to manually enter charges into the system. There is no delay by having to "Batch claims" in order to send out the bills. There is no delay caused by a big name billing software creating non-HIPPA compliant data that needs to be converted to compliant format by their electronic clearing house. On average, the office gets paid by insurance plans in one half the time with eClinicalWorks as compared to our prior software.

At our office, we know that choosing eClinicalWorks was the right decision. This software has helped our medical office evolve into an efficient, modern platform of patient care in order to remain quality oriented, independent, and financially successful. I think we are far better off now by using eCW than by still being on paper charts. And it is clear to me that eCW is constantly working on getting progressively better all the time.

A relatively new option to copy a whole chart including all scanned in reports and old scanned-in paper records is working great for us. Our medical record person can copy a 4oo page chart onto a CD in a minute (if even that long) despite having multiple different consult letters, etc in patient documents. Our copier machine lease bill has been down by *over $100/month* because we are printing out so many fewer pages now. And we are saving a bundle on postage too b/c we send all records as a CD in a little envelope with regular postage instead of in those big bulk $3-$4 envelopes; and best of all by state law we still get paid the same by the page for medical records (regardless of the format).

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